

Memo

24 March 2017

To: Environment and Community Committee
cc: Pamela Jamieson, Global Partnerships and Strategy Advisor
From: Koro Dickinson, Manager Global Partnerships and Strategy

Subject: Notification of a pending announcement on the establishment of a China Cultural Centre in Auckland

Summary

On the occasion of Chinese Premier Li Keqiang's visit to New Zealand 26-29 March, Auckland Council will announce that an "Arrangement" will be signed between Auckland Council and the Chinese Ministry of Culture, agreeing to establish a China Cultural Centre in Auckland. The main obligation on the Council is to be supportive of China's intention to establish a Cultural Centre and assist, as appropriate, with identifying a location/venue - for possible purchase/lease (by China). The arrangement will be signed by Mayor Goff (on behalf of the Council) and the Chinese Ambassador (on behalf of the Chinese Ministry of Culture) on the afternoon of 24 March.

Action: for information.

China Cultural Centre in Auckland

1. Auckland was chosen as a location for the China Cultural Centre because of its cultural diversity, its size, and the fact that it is home to New Zealand's largest Chinese community (approximately 120,000 people¹).
2. Cultural centres allow for greater cross-cultural understanding, and enhance areas of mutual interest such as education, languages, arts and culture. It is understood that China's goal is to open 50 Chinese Cultural Centres around the world by 2020.
3. There is no financial cost to the Auckland Council Group. As a party to the 'Arrangement', we (Council) expect the full financial costs of establishing a Cultural Centre in Auckland to be fully absorbed by the other party (the Chinese Ministry of Culture).
4. New Zealand will be the first country to have two China Cultural Centres - one already exists in Wellington. This is a new 'first' to go with the other New Zealand-China 'firsts' e.g. New Zealand was the first country in the world to sign a Free Trade Agreement with China in 2008².

¹ New Zealand's Chinese population has grown rapidly, with 4% of the population identifying as Chinese in the 2013 census – an increase of 1% since the 2001 census. By comparison, over 8% of Auckland's population identified as Chinese.

² During his visit to New Zealand in 2014, President Xi announced a plan for China to set up New Zealand's first China Cultural Centre. The first Centre opened in Wellington in December 2015 and showcases Chinese culture, language, art and, on occasion, government-led initiatives.

5. The Chinese have indicated that this announcement (amongst several announcements to be made while the Premier is in New Zealand) is one of their top deliverables for the visit. See attachment 1.
6. Auckland is delighted to be able to make this announcement shortly, particularly as 2017 marks the 45th year of diplomatic relations between New Zealand and China.

Next steps

7. Auckland Council will issue a press release (currently embargoed) about the announcement to establish a China Cultural Centre in Auckland.
8. The Council's press release will coincide with the respective official announcements (that will refer to several deliverables from the visit, including the Cultural Centre) by the NZ Prime Minister and the Chinese Premier – likely to be 27 March.
9. In the interim, any public announcement and press release related to the Cultural Centre is embargoed.
10. Any immediate enquiries can be directed to Council's Global Partnerships and Strategy Unit: Pamela Jamieson, Advisor (pamela.jamieson@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz; 021 813 290).

Koro Dickinson
Manager Global Partnerships and Strategy Auckland Council
Auckland Council

Bill English

20 MARCH, 2017

Chinese Premier to visit

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang will visit New Zealand next week.

Prime Minister Bill English announced today that he and Premier Li will hold official talks in Wellington, and that he and the Premier will also meet business leaders in Auckland during his visit from 26 to 29 March.

“The visit is an important opportunity to set the agenda for the next stage of our strong relationship and demonstrates our shared commitment to open trade and economic growth,” Mr English says.

Premier Li’s visit marks the 45th year of diplomatic relations between China and New Zealand, and comes three years after China and New Zealand declared a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership during a visit to New Zealand by President Xi Jinping.

Li Keqiang previously visited New Zealand in 2009 as Vice Premier, at the invitation of Mr English in his then-capacity as Deputy Prime Minister.

“Premier Li knows New Zealand well, and I look forward to discussing with him opportunities for our two countries and the region.”

The Premier will be accompanied by his wife, Professor Cheng Hong, as well as a large official and business delegation.

China is New Zealand’s second-largest trading partner. Two-way trade reached a new all-time high of NZ\$23 billion in 2016. More than 400,000 Chinese tourists visited New Zealand last year, spending over \$1.6 billion. In addition nearly 35,000 Chinese students are studying in New Zealand.

[Bill English](#) [Prime Minister](#)